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CONTEMPORARY ECHOES

A SATISFYING OUTLOOK

(From the Baltimore Sun)

THE threshold of the new year is a good time to make prognostications, because everybody is in the mood to listen to the prophets who undertake to read our future for us, whether they prophesy blindly or foolishly. If they miss the mark, we do not remember it against them to their discredit, for the future is a mighty hard mark to hit. If they strike anywhere near the center, we magnify their accuracy and their wisdom amazingly. We do not mean by this introduction to disparage the weight or authority of the article by Colonel George Harvey, published in yesterday's *Sun*, entitled "The President's Vision; Is It True, or Is It Illusive?" Even apart from Colonel Harvey's claims to consideration as a publicist of force and prominence, the article is an extremely strong and interesting one and is well worth reading on its own account. We believe, in fact, it will be more widely read and quoted, and made the text for more editorial comment than any recent outgiving of this kind, not only because of its clearness and comprehensiveness, but because of the evident desire of the writer to be fair to the President. Whatever we may think of his views and conclusions, even those of us who disagree with him will be willing to acquit him of any spirit of captious criticism.

But conceding all this, one cannot help thinking, after a careful and dispassionate reading of Colonel Harvey's review of the situation and the inferences which he draws from it, that some of the most portentous "clouds" that he sees on the horizon exist only in his own mind, or are passing shadows guiltless of storms and thunderbolts. For instance, when Colonel Harvey catalogues "subversion of the Constitution" as one of these ominous "clouds," predicating it upon Mr. Wilson's suggestion of Presidential primaries, we fail to feel as "creepy" and to shudder as much as the solemnity of the scene ought to make us do. There is just enough of the element of stage thunder and lightning about it to make it as enjoyable as it is unconvincing. Those of us who have lived in this wicked world for half a century, or have read attentively the history of the rise and growth of the American republic, may be pardoned if we do not become very much alarmed over this latest "subversion of the Constitution." The Constitution has been waylaid, sandbagged, perverted, subverted, assassinated, and butchered, in the imagination of the fearful, on innumerable occasions, from the moment it stepped out of its cradle until the present day. A villain or villains have always been pursuing it with the most dishonorable intentions; and it was hardly born and baptized before the authors of its being and its fond relatives and friends saw abductors and sinister figures behind every political and legislative bush.

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And yet in spite of all these alarms, some of them far better founded than that of Colonel Harvey, the Constitution still lives and has not been very seriously damaged, and there are many things about it that indicate a very long life. We think, with all due respect, that Colonel Harvey's constitutional cloud is largely a wind cloud, and that our vigorous and respected friend, the Constitution, will not suffer even a rheumatic twinge from it.

It may be remarked, in passing, that the criticism which he makes, under this head, of the President's ignorance of, or indifference to, the Constitution will not bear examination. The President, of course, knows quite as well as Colonel Harvey that a constitutional amendment is necessary to the Presidential primary that he suggested, and the President, equally of course, would not attempt to circumvent the Constitution, or override it, any more than Colonel Harvey would. The proposition itself may be open to criticism, but when Colonel Harvey sees in the language employed in presenting it an intention to "subvert" the Constitution, or ignorance of its provisions, he is simply splitting hairs over a form of words.

The other clouds which he describes are more or less of the same nature. It is easy to exaggerate the business situation, and Colonel Harvey takes counsel of his imagination rather than of the facts when he draws his gloomy picture. He will find, as the rest of us will, that the regular pace will be resumed before long, and that he has confused temporary dullness—a trade condition which is recurrent and natural—with "positive dejection." The country is not dejected, if Colonel Harvey is.

His "clouds" of "foreign entanglements" and the rest are much of the same manufacture. They seem very formidable to the man who looks at them from his standpoint and through smoked glasses. But they are not calculated to alarm those whose outlook has a higher and wider range.

After all, Colonel Harvey concedes the things which destroy the force of much of his criticism when he admits the President's "extraordinary faithfulness" and the country's great confidence in him. The country is much more apt to be right than one man, no matter how able a critic; and if we add to the President's "extraordinary" fidelity his unusual ability and equipment, we may feel that we are in pretty good hands and in pretty good shape to face the clouds, real or imaginary, of 1914.

Colonel Harvey's review of the political situation, and of the problems which confront the administration, discusses one subject of very great importance to the Democratic party and to the country. And that is the question of discriminating in anti-trust laws in favor of labor unions and farmers' organizations and against all other classes of American citizens. There can be no manner of doubt that Colonel Harvey is absolutely right when he denounces such a discrimination as vicious and dangerous in the extreme. It is so entirely lacking in every essential element of equity and so utterly un-American and undemocratic that it thoroughly justified President Taft's characterization as "class legislation of the most vicious sort," and President Roosevelt's declaration that it "represented a course of policy which, if carried out, would mean the enthronement of class privilege in its crudest and most brutal form."

We do not believe, however, that the Democratic majority in Congress, when it takes a sober second thought, will yield again to the temptation to which it succumbed when it attached the obnoxious exemption rider to the Sundry Civil Appropriation bill. When it did that it put on its splendid

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record a blot which nothing but that record could atone for. But the country will not bear patiently a repetition of that offense, no matter what good deeds may be pleaded as a set-off. An act so grossly inconsistent with Democratic professions and Democratic principles would shake public confidence in the party almost more than anything else that it could do, and would be so direct a blow at the fundamental principles of equality before the law, such an incitement to class hatred and strife, that the country, if true to its own traditions, would be forced to rebuke and repudiate it. All this is so obvious that we believe that, when the proposition comes out into the open, detached from other legislation, and presented on its own merits or demerits alone, no Democratic leader in Congress of any standing will be willing to continue its championship.

While, therefore, we agree with Colonel Harvey as to the menace that such legislation would carry with it and the flagrant immorality of the political principle involved, we cannot see that it as yet constitutes a dangerous "cloud" in our sky. Even if Congress should surrender to the labor unions, we think the country can count with complete confidence on the President's attitude. And we do not think Colonel Harvey does complete justice to the President in the impression which he leaves on the minds of his readers as to what Mr. Wilson is likely to do, should the question come before him for decision. Though he signed the Sundry Civil bill, containing the objectionable rider, he accompanied his approval of the bill with an explicit disapproval of the rider as "unjustifiable in character and principle," and with the declaration that it would not be permitted to tie the hands of justice. There is nothing whatever to indicate that he will have any struggle with himself to do the right and the just and the American thing when the hour comes for doing it. What he has stood for all his life, what he has stood for ever since he entered the White House, his whole character and his whole career, forbid the supposition that he would hesitate for one moment "to oppose with all his strength 'every form of special privilege and exemption.'" He is a very different man from what the country takes him to be if he were capable of failing where Taft stood firm.

INFORMATION WANTED

(From the New York American)

That prophetic publicist, Colonel George Harvey, has words of counsel to offer to the administration in the current issue of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. Offered with suitable deference and humility though they are, the counselor seems to think they may receive attention, if not, indeed, approval—a most extraordinary delusion to be cherished by one so well fitted to judge of the mental processes of the President.

The Colonel studies, seemingly in sorrow rather than in anger, the Mexican policy of the administration, and reaches the conclusion—obvious to any sane, reasoning mind—that however earnestly it was designed to avert war, it will inevitably result in war. What it has led to already Colonel Harvey describes so succinctly that we quote his words for the benefit of the few who believe that the policy of "watchful waiting" is as benevolent in results as in purpose:

"Meanwhile the wretched country is being devastated from the Rio

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Grande to the Southern Gulf; prisoners taken in battle are being slaughtered ruthlessly; helpless non-combatants are becoming the prey of savage bandits; railways are being torn up; mining and other properties to the value of unreckoned millions have already been destroyed, and American and European residents are fleeing for their lives. The gravity of the situation from the standpoint of Mexico, of our own country, or of humanity cannot be exaggerated. We are confronted by a condition of anarchy, not by a theory of government, and the position has become intolerable."

Quite so. Nothing could more accurately describe the position into which the administration's policy has led us.

But how will it end? That is the one searching question which, applied to every step in the administration's Mexican policy, has proved its worthlessness, and is equally ruthless when used as a test of Colonel Harvey's plan.

We have treated the Mexican situation with the sweet humanity of the man who, revolting from the cruelty of cutting off his dog's tail at one chop, removed it tenderly an inch at a time. There are a few inches left of this Mexican tail, and the kindly Colonel would take these two chops to remove them:

First, invite Mexico's Minister to Washington, treat his country as though it were the abode of peace and good order, and watchfully wait for the existing "intolerable condition" to be corrected by the same man and the same methods that produced it.

Second, when that has failed—but the Colonel does not suggest what should then be done. And therein he is in singular accordance with the administration he advises. For not one step taken by the President and his Secretary of State seems to have been preceded by the slightest foreknowledge of the conditions to which it might lead, nor with any preparations to meet these conditions firmly should they prove intolerable.

"CONSIDER THE END" is a very brief maxim, one that should be easily memorized and observed by statesmen. There is not the slightest indication that the powers at Washington bore it in mind at any stage of the progress of their futile Mexican policy.

[What does Mr. Hearst propose?—EDITOR.]

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

(From the San Antonio Light)

COLONEL GEORGE HARVEY, who edits THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, has thrown his eye upon the Mexican situation, so far as it concerns the United States, and has solved it. He has found the right way out of the trouble. That is, he thinks he has found it. What others of his countrymen who happen to have a few drops of red blood in their veins, a modicum of self-respect, and some lingering love for their country, may think, is another matter.

Colonel Harvey, whose advice smacks so strongly of the cowardly that it would be well if he would forego his military title, says that the United States has made certain propositions to Huerta which that individual has seen fit to ignore. This is entirely correct. He also says that the United

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States occupies, at present, a diplomatic position that is not entirely creditable to it, nor calculated to enhance its prestige in the eyes of the world. This is also correct. Then Colonel Harvey brings out his remedy. This is it:

President Wilson shall say to Huerta: "I have made certain propositions to you to which you have paid no attention. I have suggested that you resign. You have not resigned. I have suggested that you agree not to be a candidate for re-election. You have refused to agree to that. I have asked that you put yourself in the background, and allow your country to become pacified without the irritation of your official presence. You have taken no notice of that. All the snubs you have given me prove that my policy has failed to restore order in Mexico. I therefore admit that I have been wrong, and, my plan having failed, I am willing to try what you think best.

"You have asked that this country recognize you as the *de facto* government of Mexico. I have refused to agree to this, and have said that this country will never recognize you. I now admit that I should never have taken such a stand and proclaim that I am willing to do as you have asked. When I have done this, I am willing that you shall go ahead in your own way, and pacify the country."

Colonel Harvey says that if President Wilson would do that it would give the United States a standing in Mexico that it has never had up to the present time.

This is probably true. The United States has never stood high in the estimation of the great mass of the Mexican people, and that standing has sunk lower and lower since the outbreak of the Madero revolt against Diaz. It has not a great deal of its standing left. If President Wilson followed the advice of Colonel Harvey it would have less than none at all. All Mexico would write the name of this country with a minus sign before it. Viewed in this way, the Colonel's prediction might work out.

It may be remembered that President Wilson, when his Presidential campaign was hatching, informed Colonel Harvey that he did not care for his assistance in the conduct of his candidacy. If the advice the Colonel is now turning out is a fair sample of what he was offering to Candidate Wilson, there can be no doubt that Mr. Wilson acted wisely in rejecting it. It is un-American, unsound, founded on a wild misconception of the Mexican character, and, generally speaking, no good at all.

The Colonel has convicted himself, and justified the President in his repudiation of Harvey's advice, the quality of which seems to be growing poorer.

AS SEEN IN MINNESOTA

(From the St. Paul Dispatch)

THE Mexican revolution drags out its weary course, and Huerta gives not the slightest sign of weakening, as if to give irresistible force to the impassioned plea of George Harvey in the December NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, for the abandonment of President Wilson's Mexican policy. While freely admitting the noble motives actuating Wilson in pursuing that policy, Mr. Harvey asserts that the United States must either go to war with Mexico or withdraw from its attempt to oust Huerta. Without hesitation, the editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW declares for the latter

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alternative, and many thinking people of all parties in this country will be disposed to side with him.

After reviewing the course of events from the time Madero was ousted from the Presidency of Mexico on February 18th, Mr. Harvey proceeds:

"The whole matter resolves to this:

What legal or moral right has a President of the United States to say who shall or shall not be President of Mexico? and

Did not President Wilson imbed himself in a practically inextricable position when he demanded the retirement of Huerta?"

In answer to the first question, Mr. Harvey quotes from the message of President Franklin Pierce of May 15, 1856, the following:

"It is the established policy of the United States to recognize governments without question of their source of organization or the means by which the governing persons attain their power, provided there be a government *de facto* accepted by the people of the country."

Replying to the second question, the editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW believes President Wilson made a great strategic mistake when he demanded that—

"Huerta relinquish authority upon the ground, clearly implied, that he was directly concerned in the assassination of Madero. If innocent, he would not and, if guilty, he could not comply with such a request. Acquiescence would have spelled confession in either case. Nothing could be plainer than that. President Wilson's method frustrated his own intent and could not possibly have operated otherwise. Instead of eliminating Huerta from power, he riveted him in his place, there to remain, in all probability, until he shall be expelled by force of arms."

Having shown the futility of America's present Mexican policy, Mr. Harvey counsels President Wilson, whose candidacy for the Presidency he did so much to further, to recede from his demand for the withdrawal of Huerta. He quotes the *London Spectator*, which sagely contends that "the present American policy" must end "either in war and an eventual protectorate, or in a reversal of the attempt at dictation by means of an unworkable imperialism."

It is a reversal of this "unworkable imperialism" for which Mr. Harvey pleads.

"It would be inconsistent with our declared attitude, would be a recession on the part of the President, would humiliate us as a nation in the eyes of the world. Perhaps, yes; and for that very reason it would live forever as a performance and an example, as the noblest act ever done by a great and powerful nation in the interest of a weak and suffering people."

How can President Wilson escape this logic?

FROM MASSACHUSETTS

(From the *Pittsfield Eagle*)

IN the December NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW are several articles indicating a number of very serious flaws in the President. Take, for example, the editorial on "Breaking the Pledge." Colonel Harvey reproduces the plank from the Baltimore platform which declares that "the law pertaining to the civil service should be honestly and rigidly enforced, to the end that merit and ability shall be the standard of appointment and promotion, rather than service rendered to a political party," and also

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the President's subsequent assertion that "I am a hearty believer in the principles of civil-service reform and shall take pleasure at all times in doing what I can to promote those principles in practice." But the love of the President grew cold. One month after he was inaugurated he declined re-election as vice-president of the Civil Service Reform League. Then comes from the pen of Colonel Harvey a history of a bill which the President signed—an act described as a "reversion to the spoils system as against the merit system," in flat violation of the pledge of the Democratic President. The Colonel closes with this bitter reflection:

"President Wilson's reference to the country-wide knowledge of his 'warm advocacy and support' of civil-service reform calls for no comment. It has long been recognized and served an excellent purpose in winning votes in the recent campaign. The point at issue is one, not of profession, but of performance."

Indeed it is. President Wilson and other "theorists" promised the country faithfully that the cost of living would go down. It has gone up instead. Those who made the pledge—the pledges—will be held to a strict accountability. "The point at issue is one, not of profession, but of performance."

[To the best of our information, President Wilson never made such a promise or prediction concerning the cost of living.—EDITOR.]

(From the Northampton Gazette)

Back down! That was the advice of Colonel Harvey to President Wilson, and that is the advice of the astutest political interpreter of the country, Mr. O'Brien, of the *Boston Herald*, on the Mexican policy. The President's motives, says Mr. O'Brien, though wretched diplomacy, were entirely creditable. He hoped, not unnaturally, that the withdrawal of his support would prove fatal to Huerta, who would thus be unseated by peaceful means. Had Mr. Wilson succeeded, the proof of Huerta's weakness, thus revealed, would have afforded some element of justification. Even then the question might be raised whether any other Mexican ruler would have been strong enough to withstand this policy, and whether, by injuring the one apparently the strongest, Mr. Wilson has not lent himself to the continuance of bloodshed and terrorism. Ten months, however, have shown convincingly to the world, if not to President Wilson, the mistake of his decision. Huerta is still in the saddle and the President is in the embarrassing situation of having "his bluff called." His scheme has failed to materialize. It has intensified the unrest which it designed to quell. It has unsettled Mexico, and apparently for a long period to come. The only course that now remains outside of intervention, which the President has creditably avoided, is to swallow his own policy, be it ever so bitter a pill, and recognize the *de facto* government as has England and other European powers. The only valid objection that could be urged against this course is the reflection on our diplomatic dignity. But admission of error is never a confession of weakness. The President's mistake was excusable. Because it was based on the highest motives he has received widespread support. By a frank, open avowal, by a reversal of his policy in an effort to rectify the damage, he would be performing by far the most creditable act that can be written into the diplomatic history of the present régime.

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FROM COLORADO

(From the *Denver Herald-Republican*)

Editor Harvey's candid discussion of the President's Mexican policy and his civil-service machinations in the Sunday *Herald-Republican* cannot, therefore, be considered as from an unfriendly source. Mr. Wilson's champions may not dismiss the logic and facts contained therein as prejudiced because of their origin. These were collected and collated by one who wishes well to the administration, but whose duty, as editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, is to be fearless and impartial in his discussion of public happenings.

Mr. Harvey is a Democrat, jealous of his party's honor and zealous in guarding its integrity. He approached his subject with an open mind, although disposed to give his party and his party chief the benefit of whatever doubt might exist. The conclusions he reached are consequently tantamount to Democracy's own verdict upon itself and its representative in the Presidency; they are buttressed by indubitable facts and are, therefore, just.

It is a source of no little satisfaction to the *Herald-Republican* to observe the striking similarity between the arguments used by Colonel Harvey and those we have repeatedly employed; the deductions are identical and they are couched in much the same phrases. They form a complete *tu quoque* to those that have condemned the freedom with which we have discussed the President's Mexican policy and that have resented the forceful candor with which we punctured his civil-service pretensions. Their character conclusively destroys the theories of them that have dismissed our criticism of the President with the thought that we are bound, by contract and inclination, to find good in nothing he does and bad in everything.